



Office of Public Safety, Health & Welfare
City of Stamford
888 Washington Boulevard, 10th floor
Stamford, CT 06901

**Testimony of Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare
Thaddeus K. Jankowski Concerning HB 6576
February 13, 2015**

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Miller and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee. My name is Thaddeus Jankowski and I am the Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare in the City of Stamford. As a member of Mayor David Martin's cabinet, I am here representing the City of Stamford. I wish to testify today in SUPPORT of HB 6576 – An Act Exempting Municipally Owned Nursing Homes from Certain State Fees.

The Smith House Skilled Nursing Facility is one of the only two remaining city-owned facilities in our state. For more than 50 years (since 1963) Smith House has provided vital and necessary services to residents of the State of Connecticut. It is a 128 bed facility providing Long Term Skilled Nursing Care, specialty care for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related illnesses, short-term rehabilitation care, and end-of-life care.

The patients utilizing Smith House are Connecticut residents, a majority of whose healthcare is supported by Medicaid which as you know is a government insurance program for families and individuals primarily with low income and limited resources.

Last year the Smith House Skilled Nursing Facility suffered a \$3.2 million loss. This year it is projected to lose \$4.7 million. The State of Connecticut Nursing Home User fee (applies to "for profit" and city-owned facilities) averages approximately \$665,000 annually for Smith House. The state fees levied on Smith House places a severe burden on the facility, accounting for approximately 20% of the annual financial loss.

The annual loss is subsidized by Stamford residents, the same taxpayers who also pay Federal and State taxes used to fund Medicare and Medicaid. It is unfair and is an undue burden for Stamford residents to pay State and Federal taxes and to also have to bear the burden of funding the State Nursing Home fees of \$665,000.00 annually for a municipally owned facility.

Because the financial burden to the taxpayer for Smith House continues to grow, Stamford's elected Boards are considering alternatives for the facility. Needless to say, the closing of the Smith House would be detrimental to Connecticut residents, who are most in need of quality nursing home services during a vulnerable stage of their lives.

As the Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare for the City of Stamford, on behalf of Mayor Martin and the residents of the City of Stamford and for all Connecticut residents who require the services of quality Nursing Home Services I respectfully urge you to support HB 6576 - An Act Exempting Municipally Owned Nursing Homes from Certain State Fees. Relief from such a burden will enable quality care to continue for our citizens.

The approval of HB 6576 will provide financial support to allow the Smith House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center to continue to provide quality services for Connecticut residents. Your approval will also show Stamford's elected Boards that the State of Connecticut supports the Smith House facility for Connecticut residents in need.

Respectfully,

Thaddeus K. Jankowski
Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare